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From: Robert Humphrey [<mailto:bob9354@sbcglobal.net>]

Sent: Monday, January 28, 2008 11:51 PM

To: MLPAComments

Cc: cencal; NorCalSkinDivers@yahooogroups.com

Subject: North coast access concerns

I'd like to offer a comment with regard to the siting of marine protected areas on our north coast. This is the first (and possibly last) letter that I have written concerning the North Coast MLPA process. I have become somewhat pessimistic about the chances that my opinion really counts for much, but on the outside chance that I'm wrong, I thought I should go ahead and submit this general plea.

First, a little background. I am an avid freedive spearfisher. Most of my forays into the wild north coast ocean are via kayak. This is the case with many of my fellow freediver spearfishers.

I would say that the main concern for all of us is access. Hopefully someone on one or more of your panels has detailed the scarcity of the access that already exists for people entering the north coast ocean from shore. For kayak divers, you can almost count them on two hands for the region. Off the top of my head, here is a south to north list of the practical access points we have available (I specify "practical" because there are some points not listed that are possible, but not easy, to get a kayak into):

Ft. Ross cove
Timber cove
Stillwater cove
Ocean cove
Gerstle cove
Fisk Mill cove
Anchor bay
Pt. Arena

I may have missed a couple, but those are the only points of access that I have used without some pretty heavy duty portaging.

If you remove even ONE of those access points from the list, you will have eliminated over 12% of our fishing opportunity, and you will concentrate our fishing effort in the areas left to us.

To me, and others, that represents a greatly disproportionate impact and just doesn't seem fair or necessary. It's obvious why it doesn't seem fair. It isn't necessary because there are plenty of places that we CAN'T access that are usable as marine protected areas. One might say in answer to that, "but then we'd be disproportionately impacting some OTHER interest group", but that wouldn't be true because other interest groups (CPFV, private skiffs, commercial fishermen, shore fishers) don't have the same problem with access that we have. Because of their mobility, they have much greater opportunities to fish elsewhere.

So please take this into consideration when determining the sites for MPAs. I'm not going to continue harping on this or rallying the masses to every meeting. Most of us are too busy supporting families and too

tired of banging our heads against walls to do that anyway. I'm hoping that this one simple plea will be carried in your memories throughout the time you spend working on this project.

Thank you for considering this request, and thank you for volunteering.

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